

STATE FIRE MARSHAL

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF

History is the perfect teacher if we are willing to learn and remember, even if, or more so, when the events are tragic. Every year, as “Fire Prevention Month” is upon us, we, in the fire service can’t help but reflect back on the fire history in America. As far back as 1711 and later in 1760 Boston Massachusetts saw its share of devastating fires. With the memory of the 1711 fire still fresh and on the heels of the Great Boston fire of 1760, the city fathers used the opportunity to increase Boston’s fire prevention measures. They changed roofing materials, increased some street widths, provided fire fighting equipment throughout the city, and increased well holes for fire fighting water. But even Boston lost its fire prevention memory. Peter Charles Hoffer in his book *Seven Fires* writes, “Distracted by its political fires, Boston took no decisive steps to make itself fireproof. Indeed, after 1760 the fires kept coming. Any one of them might have grown into a conflagration like that of 1760”.



Acting State Fire Marshal
Tonya L. Hoover

Moving ahead (and looking back) to October 1871 we are once again reminded of the force of fire; the Great Chicago Fire and the Peshtigo, Wisconsin fire. According to historians, the city of Chicago had already seen 700 fires before the Great Fire; and up to the night before their Fire Department worked furiously to extinguish a multi-building fire at a wood planning mill. The fire on October 8 did not start with Mrs. O’Leary’s cow but has been attributed to Mrs. O’Leary’s barn. One strong theory is that people smoking in the O’Leary barn accidentally ignited hay and wood shavings on the floor; there was a delay in notifying the fire department; and the gusting dry hot winds carried the fire throughout the combustible city. When the flames subsided on October 10, the fire had consumed approximately 2,000 acres (3 square miles); 300 lives were lost; one third of the city’s population was without shelter (about 100,000 people); and \$200 million of property was destroyed.

Fire historians and those in the fire service also remember that on the same day of the Great Chicago Fire, the community of Peshtigo, Wisconsin was devastated by the fury of flames; as the worst recorded forest fire raged out of control. The aftermath left approximately 2,400 square miles burned (about 1.5 million acres); between 1,200 and 2,400 lives were lost; and hundreds of structures were destroyed. Entire villages and farm settlements including the Village of Peshtigo were gone. Scholars have listed the cause of the fire due to extreme drought conditions, combined with land-clearing practices of the time causing many small fires that developed into a huge forest fire when a storm hit the evening of October 8, 1871.

One hundred and twenty years later the California communities of Berkeley and Oakland are now part of our fire history which is known as the Tunnel Fire in 1991. The Oakland-Berkeley hills dense with vegetation, narrow streets, limited water supply and unpredictable, severe fire weather added up to a fire fight. The aftermath of the Tunnel Fire resulted in twenty-five deaths, 150 seriously injured and 2,843 homes totally destroyed. Approximately 30,000 people evacuated their homes and businesses; as the fire’s perimeter stretched over 5.25 miles with the damage estimated at slightly over \$1.5 billion. It’s now twenty years since that devastating fire, and California continues to see more than its share of devastating wildfires and the impact of fire to its citizens and the environment.

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF (CONTINUED)

As we commemorate "Fire Prevention Month" with the week of October 9 - 15 designated as National Fire Prevention Week we recall the many catastrophic fire events that occurred in October; and as we look at our fire history throughout the years and months, we remember and learn. We in the fire service, as standing members of our community's risk mitigation team, continue to share the lessons learned every single day in our communities. The message is brought close to "home" with this year's National Fire Prevention Week theme:

"It's Fire Prevention Week. Protect your Family From Fire!"

Be safe!



TONYA L. HOOVER
Acting State Fire Marshal

FIRE ENGINEERING

The Building Materials Listing Program

The listing function, which provides for the California State Fire Marshal (CSFM) to approve and list all fire alarm devices before they are offered for sale or sold in California is mandated by the California Health and Safety Code Section 13114. Recently, Senate Bill 183 mandated that Carbon Monoxide devices be approved and listed by the CSFM. The CSFM, per various sections of the Health and Safety Code, is also authorized to approve and list additional building materials and/or fire/life safety items on a voluntary basis. Voluntarily listed products include items such as fire resistive designs, fire resistive materials, fire dampers, doors, windows, door locks, exit signs, and products for use in wildland urban interface (WUI) areas.

The Building Materials Listing (BML) Program was established in 1945 and currently has approximately 2600 products listed; the majority of which are fire alarm devices. The listing program serves as a vital informational tool for local fire and building departments, architects, engineers, contractors and the public. Program staff also provides technical information and assistance to our stakeholders for issues relating to listed products.

Products listed by the CSFM, must first be tested by an approved testing laboratory, to an adopted standard. Technical staff evaluates the submitted data to ensure compliance with the appropriate standard and other California regulations; and approved/listed items are posted on the CSFM web site at: http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/strucfireengineer/strucfireengineer_bml.php

FIRE AND RESOURCE ASSESSMENT PROGRAM

Urban Forestry Leading Edge Grant Project

There is a growing recognition of the potential for urban forestry and other urban greening to contribute to the environmental, social, and economic health of communities. The ability to quantify these benefits has increased since 2006, with the development of i-Tree, a software suite from the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) that provides urban forestry analysis and benefits assessment tools.

The Fire and Resource Assessment Program in the Office of the State Fire Marshal have recently contracted with the USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station to conduct an Urban Forest Inventory and Assessment Project in San Jose, California. GIS data layers will be produced for tree canopies and other land cover types which will be used to calculate the monetary value of benefits. The GIS data layers will also be used to calculate current tree canopy cover percent, number of trees, and identify potential tree planting sites. Local agencies and policy makers can utilize this information in planning and management decisions, including establishing tree canopy cover targets to achieve desired benefits. While this research will provide data and information regarding benefits provided by the San Jose urban forests, it also will create a framework model that can be expanded to other communities as funding allows.

FIRE PLAN

First Strategic Fire Plan Report Delivered

At the September meeting of the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection (Board), Phyllis Banducci – Chief of the Fire Plan Unit in the Office of the State Fire Marshal - presented the first annual report of accomplishments under the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan (Plan).

The Plan's stated vision is to move towards "... a natural environment that is more resilient and man-made assets which are more resistant to the occurrence and effects of wildland fire through local, state, federal and private partnerships." Goals to reach this vision, along with objectives for each goal, are set forth in the Plan. Achievements include:

- development of a new Unit Fire Plan template, including a step-by-step guide, for use by CAL FIRE field staff and partners
- creation, testing, and delivery to the field of new tools and approaches for use in creating local fire plans
- construction of a new statewide database to facilitate planning, tracking, and reporting of projects
- training of Unit and related personnel in completing plans
- writing of Unit Fire Plans and submitted to Sacramento; which have been posted on the CAL FIRE internet site
- establishment of a new Fire Plan website at <http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/fireplan/fireplanning.php>.

To date, twenty CAL FIRE Units and six Contract County Fire Plans have been updated using the new template; highlights of these plans include:

- Executive Summaries addressing the goals and objectives of the 2010 Strategic Fire Plan.
- All CAL FIRE Units and Contract Counties collaborating with Fire Safe councils, local government, and federal partners when present.
- Ignition analysis in the majority of the Fire Plans; with the analysis identifying the leading cause of fire as debris burning and vehicle or equipment use. (This is consistent with the statistics displayed in the 2010 Wildland Fire Statistics Report -Redbook).
- Plans identifying and prioritizing fuel reduction/fire prevention projects.
- The use, by many Units, of the Priority Landscapes from the 2010 Forest and Range Assessment to identify assets and priority areas.

The updated Fire Plans may be viewed at http://cdfdata.fire.ca.gov/fire_er/fpp_planning_plans

The San Luis Obispo Unit is in the process of developing a county-wide Community Wildfire Protection Plan (CWPP) to be combined with the Unit Fire Plan to provide a single fire safe guiding document for San Luis Obispo County; anticipated completion this month. It is expected the actions towards enhanced methods to combine County Plans with CAL FIRE Unit Plans will be identified; providing a consistent fire safe analytical framework; and continued improvements in planning and coordination between CAL FIRE and its stakeholders.

CODE DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS

The Office of the State Fire Marshal (OSFM), in conjunction with other State agencies, is in the process of developing and proposing Building Standards for the 2013 California Building Standards Codes. The general purpose is principally intended to update and codify a new edition of the California Building Standards Code (California Code of Regulations, Title 24) that adopt by reference more current editions of the model codes. The more recent editions of the following model codes proposed to be adopted by reference are:

- 2012 International Building Code (IBC)
- 2012 International Fire Code (IFC)
- 2012 International Residential Code (IRC)
- 2011 National Electrical Code (NEC)
- 2012 Uniform Mechanical Code (UMC)
- 2012 Uniform Plumbing Code (UPC)

CODE DEVELOPMENT AND ANALYSIS(CONTINUED)

The objective is to develop an adoption package that includes model code language and current applicable California amendments. The intent is that the final adoption package would include amendments necessary to reasonably maintain a substantially equivalent level of fire and life safety in California. This proposed action will:

- Repeal the adoption by reference of the model codes and incorporate and adopt by reference in its place more recent model codes for application and effectiveness in the 2013 California Building Standards Code pursuant to Health and Safety Code 18928. Health and Safety Code 18928 requires any State agency adopting model codes to adopt the most recent edition.
- Repeal certain amendments to the model codes and/or California building standards not addressed by the model code that are no longer necessary pursuant to Health and Safety Code 18930(a)(7).
- Adopt new California building standards or necessary California amendments to the model codes that address inadequacies of the model codes as they pertain to California laws.
- Bring forward previously existing California building standards or amendments, which represent no change in their effect from the 2010 California Building Standards Code.
- Codify non-substantive editorial and formatting amendments for the format based upon the more recent edition of the model codes.

Stakeholder input and participation is necessary to assist the OSFM in developing building standards. The SFM is promulgating this rulemaking package in the continuing effort to foster, promote and develop additional ways and means of protecting life and property against fire and panic while minimizing the economic impact. The OSFM is tentatively scheduling stakeholder meetings to discuss the adoption of new model codes and amendments on:

October 18, 2011
January 18, 2012

November 16, 2011
February 15, 2012

December 14, 2011

The State Fire Marshal, by State Law, is responsible for the coordination of the State's fire and life safety codes; and must review proposed regulations of other State agencies that promote fire and panic safety before the regulations are submitted for approval. According to a timetable being considered by the State agencies, this rulemaking package is proposed for submission to the California State Building Standards Commission by June 2012.

For additional information, please visit the State Fire Marshal Code Development and Analysis website:

<http://osfm.fire.ca.gov/codedevelopment/codedevelopment.php>

To be included on the SFM Code Development and Analysis Division stakeholder email distribution list for regulation development or for additional information please email Kevin Reinertson at Kevin.reinertson@fire.ca.gov

STATE FIRE TRAINING

Military Service Members- Firefighter I Certification



Assembly Bill 398, was approved by Governor Brown on September 6, 2011 and states in part, "This bill would authorize the State Fire Marshal to accept certification by the United States Department of Defense as a firefighter, as specified, as an alternative for the fire protection personnel training and certification standards for the position of Firefighter I established by the State Fire Marshal." It provides for broader consideration and recruitment processes for those service men and women returning from military duty by authorizing the local fire chiefs to authorize and accept basic firefighter training, including DOD firefighter training.

The local Fire Chief is responsible for signing the California Firefighter I Certification and ensuring the candidate meets the job performance requirements in the Firefighter I Task Book. The initial training may be from a variety of sources; however, it is the on-the-job evaluation (one year for volunteers and 6 months for paid personnel) that is conducted at the local level which the local Fire Chief is validating for State Fire Training registration. Locally, the Fire Chief, working in concert with their human resources department, may open their recruitment processes to accept eligible military applicants.